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Marco Rubio and Donald Trump appear unlikely to attend Broward GOP dinner days before March 15 primary



(<https://miamiherald.typepad.com/.a/6a00d83451b26169e201b8d1ace16d970c-pi>)

Can the Broward GOP get some presidential candidate love before the March 15 primary?

Doesn't look promising.

Sorting out who will speak has been a mighty challenge for Bob Sutton, chair of the Broward Republican Executive Committee. He's had to manage the various issues from competing campaigns.

Jeb Bush was initially scheduled as the keynote speaker but cancelled after dropping out of the race.

Sutton said he has no confirmation from **Marco Rubio** or **Donald Trump**. Rubio's schedule for Saturday is jam-packed ending with a rally in Pensacola at 7 p.m. **Trump's** last event is a rally in Cleveland at 2 p.m., according to his schedule.

Both Rubio and Trump have high-profile surrogates who will speak: former presidential candidate **Ben Carson** who endorsed Trump Friday and U.S. Sen. **Tim Scott** of South Carolina who endorsed Rubio.

Sutton said about a day after he announced Scott as the keynote, the Trump campaign asked him to name New Jersey Gov. **Chris Christie** as the keynote speaker. Sutton says he told the campaign that Christie could speak but not as the keynote.

"I said we've already announced who the keynote speaker is," Sutton said. "I have a sitting senator that is confirmed as our keynote speaker. I wasn't going to dump him."

(The Trump campaign request was previously reported by Beth Reinhard (<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2016/03/08/intrigue-over-local-florida-gop-dinner-speaker-lineup-shows-march-15-stakes/>), former politics reporter for the *Miami Herald* who now works at the *Wall Street Journal*.)

Campaign spokespersons for Rubio and Trump didn't respond to emails from the *Miami Herald* about the event in recent days. The other two remaining GOP candidates, **Ted Cruz** and **John Kasich**, are not expected to attend.

Nearly all of the 360 guests at the Broward fundraising dinner have likely already voted or have made up their minds, but candidates often speak at Lincoln Day dinners for the free media exposure. Sutton said he's had inquiries from reporters in the U.S., Paris and the U.K.

Other speakers (<https://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2016/03/senator-tim-scott-to-headline-broward-gop-dinner.html>) include U.S. Senate candidates **Lt. Gov. Carlos Lopez-Cantera**, **U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis** and **Todd Wilcox**.

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Left-leaning Broward County has 240,000 registered Republicans -- the third largest in the state behind Miami-Dade and Hillsborough counties.

"If we can get a 30% turnout it will make a big difference," Sutton said.

The event will be held at the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Marina.

Presidential candidates have not held any major public events in Broward this cycle although Carson signed books at a Barnes and Noble in Fort Lauderdale. (Bush spoke at the Broward Workshop (<https://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2014/mar/26/jeb-bush/while-talking-about-keystone-xl-pipeline-jeb-bush-/>) in 2014 about a year before he officially jumped into the race.)

About 41,000 Broward Republicans have voted so far, state records (<https://countyballotfiles.elections.myflorida.com/FVRSCountyBallotReports/AbsenteeEarlyVotingReports/PublicStats>) showed Friday.

Posted by Amy Sherman on Friday, Mar. 11, 2016 at 12:54 PM in 2016 Election, Broward Politics, Donald Trump, Marco Rubio | [Permalink](#)

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